

THE
**FUTURE
OF
AMERICA'S
NATIONAL
PARKS**

First Annual
Centennial Strategy for

Arches National Park

August 2007

CENTENNIAL INITIATIVE



Site: ARCH

Year: 2007

Vision Statement

Arches National Park contains the country's largest concentration of natural stone openings. Arches, spires, balanced rocks, canyons and fins of colorful red rocks are set against the dramatic backdrop of the La Sal Mountains, rising over 12,000 feet in elevation. Over 800,000 visitors per year come from all over the world to view the spectacular scenery and hike the many short trails. The Fiery Furnace is a world-renowned area where rangers lead guided walks through a maze of tall fins and shady canyons. The high desert ecosystem provides an interesting array of blackbrush, pinyon-juniper and open grassland habitats.

The Centennial vision for the park and its partners includes improved accessibility and improving the condition and safety of our trails and buildings. We hope to welcome new audiences and provide a range of opportunities, including new technologies, to enable them to experience and learn about the park. We will reduce the environmental impacts of park operations through increased recycling and the retrofit of the Visitor Center heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) to a more energy-efficient system. Future natural resource management efforts will include ecological restoration of park lands through removal of exotic plant species, restoration of native soil crusts to impacted areas, and ongoing monitoring of native plants and animals. Management and knowledge of cultural resources will be improved through a partial parkwide archeological inventory, and digitization of archival collections.

Arches has a growing list of supporters including a new partner in the Bates Wilson Legacy Foundation and our longstanding partnership with the Canyonlands Natural History Association. Resource management partners such as Plateau Restorations are already hard at work removing exotic species and restoring riparian areas in the park.

Park management and our partners stand ready for chances to move forward with signature projects and other opportunities that the Centennial Challenge will bring.

Park/ Superintendent/ Program Manager

Laura E. Joss

Site: ARCH

STEWARDSHIP

☒ Provide inspiring, safe, and accessible places for people to enjoy - the standard to which all other park systems aspire.

☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Accessibility planning and implementation at Arches National Park will result in physical accessibility improvements for park employees and visitors. While buildings, restrooms, picnic sites and campsites are generally accessible, visitors with physical impairments cannot access a single arch nor a single cultural resource. Several sites were identified in the past as possible projects, but no specific planning or engineering has ever been completed. Double Arch and the Wolfe Ranch National Historic District and Petroglyph panel are examples of sites which could, and should, be made accessible. Potential Partners: Telecom Pioneers, Utah State Parks Trails Program, makers of recycled lumber (e.g. Unilever; Close the Loop, Inc.)

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Site: ARCH

STEWARDSHIP

☒ Improve the condition of park resources and assets.

☒ Restore native habitats by controlling invasive species and reintroducing key plant and animal species.

Native soil crusts play a critical role in ecosystem of parks in southeast Utah. However, the fragile crusts have been impacted in many areas by visitor use. Preliminary research has suggested that soil crusts can be restored through at least two methods: dispersing an inoculum and transplanting developed crust. This project proposes to research current literature, consult with experts in the field, and conduct large scale restoration projects on impacted areas where crust development has not occurred. Potential partner: Plateau Restoration

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☒ Improve the natural resources in parks, as measured by the vital signs developed under the Natural Resource Challenge.

Continue to work with the Colorado Plateau Inventory and Monitoring program and outside researchers to identify key indicators, inventory park natural resources, develop and implement monitoring protocols, and report results in a way that can be used by park interpreters and the public.

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☒ Complete all cultural resource inventories for designated priority resources.

Arches National Park encompasses 76,519 acres and to date, approximately 4,000 acres of the park, or less than 5.3%, have been systematically surveyed for archeological resources. These surveyed areas resulted in the documentation of 168 sites, which are mostly concentrated along road corridors, developed areas, campgrounds, and trailheads. The lack of systematic archeological survey information impacts park planning efforts and impedes the effective protection, preservation, interpretation and management of cultural resources. Assuming an average of 23 sites per acre, it's possible that an additional 3,100 sites are present within the boundaries of Arches National Park. This project proposes to undertake a professional, intensive cultural resource inventory of approx. 10,500 acres. With the previously surveyed acreage, this will bring the percentage of acres surveyed to nearly 19% and will increase our knowledge of site distribution by focusing on all the ecozones within the park.

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Site: ARCH

STEWARDSHIP

☒ Improve the condition of park resources and assets.

☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

With visitation of over 800,000 Arches National Park offer spectacular hiking opportunities. From short, quarter-mile walks to multi-day backpack trips, hiking is one of the most popular activities in this group of parks. This project would provide for routine trail maintenance and trail reconstruction throughout the park. Many of the trails have been neglected for many years and this package would ensure that they were in good condition prior to the NPS Centennial. Potential partners include: American Hiking Society (National Trails Fund), American Airlines (Mile for Trails), Utah State Parks and Recreation (Utah Trails and Pathways Program), Canyon Country Conservation Corps (4Cs) and the Sierra Club.

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Site: ARCH

STEWARDSHIP

☒ Assure that no compelling chapter in the American heritage experience remains untold and that strategically important landscapes are acquired, as authorized by Congress.

☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Arches is facing the potential lease and development of State Trust Lands on the park's west boundary, a strategically important landscape. In recent years, the State of Utah Schools and Institutional Trust Lands Administration (SITLA), approved the development of an area of motorcycle trails near the park boundary, and is actively advertising for developers to lease the largest and most sensitively placed parcel of land facing the park. In response to park requests, SITLA has stated their intention of developing the property with an eye for park impacts. However, the tract will be attractive to development. In the interim, the park has been working with Grand Canyon Trust to identify possible purchase of easements on some or all of the tract.

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Site: ARCH

STEWARDSHIP

☒ Serve as the Preeminent resource laboratory by applying excellence in science and scholarship to understand and respond to environmental changes.

☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Host annual astronomy events and other "dark sky" related outreach and education efforts. Develop outreach to obtain volunteers for professional fields and academic settings.

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Site: ARCH

ENVIRONMENT

☒ Reduce environmental impacts of park operations.

☒ Reduce the environmental impacts of park operations on air and water quality.

To reduce the environmental impacts of the park's operations, Arches hopes to replace the Visitor Center conventional electrical system with a sustainable energy system. This project will entail converting or supplementing the traditional electrical and hot water systems in the 18,000 square foot Visitor Center to a sustainable solar photovoltaic system. This facility serves a large portion of the park's 800,000 visitors, and typically sees over 2,000 visitors per day in the busy spring and fall seasons. Solar photovoltaics can be used to generate electricity to power the air conditioning and other electrical needs. A separate solar hot water system can be used for heating hot water. This project will improve visitor appreciation for and understanding of sustainable design principles and new technologies. In addition, the project would save long-term utility costs to the park. Potential partners include Rocky Mountain Power; Utah Clean Energy; and possibly General Electric.

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Site: ARCH

ENVIRONMENT

☒ Inspire an environmental conscience in Americans.

☒ Establish programs to showcase exemplary environmental practices and increase visitor awareness of how the practices apply to their daily lives, as measured by surveys.

Increase efforts to interpret and provide educational programs on the integrated, self-sustaining photovoltaic (solar) power system used at Devils Garden Campground.

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☒ Demonstrate environmental excellence through increased use of alternative energy and fuels at every park.

Purchase/lease additional energy efficient, alternative fuel and/or hybrid vehicles whenever possible for park use.

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Site: ARCH

ENVIRONMENT

☒ Engage partners, communities, and visitors in shared environmental stewardship.

☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Arches National Park would like to encourage visitor and staff recycling by creating a consolidated area at the Visitor Center. Materials to be collected include glass, aluminum, tin, plastic, cardboard, newspaper and white and mixed office paper. The collection area would be sensitively fenced and signed to reduce visual impact, yet attract visitors to use it. The project would encourage visitor recycling, and likely reduce littering throughout the parks. It would reduce maintenance staff time at Arches, where recycling containers are currently placed throughout the park, and must be emptied by maintenance staff regularly. Potential partners include Unilever and the National Park Foundation.

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Site: ARCH

RECREATION

☒ Encourage collaboration among and assist park and recreation systems at every level-federal, regional, state, local-to help build an outdoor recreation network accessible to all Americans.

☒ Rehabilitate over 2,000 miles of trails within or connected to national parks, including trails accessible to those with disabilities.

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☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

The Arches National Park Visitor Center (VC) serves a large number of the park's 800,000 visitors, and typically sees over 1,000 visitors per day in the busy spring and fall seasons. Shade structures in the VC entrance plaza were destroyed during wind storms in 2006. In addition to providing comfort for visitors during the extremely hot and sunny summer conditions, the shade structure provided protection for outdoor exhibits and multilingual interactive computer kiosks. Without the shade, computers have had to be removed due to the threat of sun damage to fragile computer screens. This project will improve visitor satisfaction by enabling access to information about the park and trip planning using computer programs designed for visitor orientation. The shade structure will be designed with either traditional latilla-style slats (perhaps recycled plastic lumber) or cloth shade sails. Potential partners include: National Park Foundation, Unilever, Close the Loop, Inc.

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Site: ARCH

RECREATION

☒ Establish "volun-tourism" excursions to national parks for volunteers to help achieve natural and cultural resource protection goals.

☒ Increase annual volunteer hours by 100 percent, from 5.2 million hours to 10.4 million hours.

A southeast Utah non-profit organization, Plateau Restorations works in partnership with Arches to direct volunteers to remove exotic vegetation (e.g. tamarisk) and restore riparian areas with native plants. We hope to identify additional opportunities to work with Plateau Restorations and other groups (e.g. Sierra Club) to increase volunteer hours in the park.

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☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Encourage volunteerism from the local community by promoting an exchange program with Moab's interagency visitor information center—one-day a week in season, a local community resident work at the park visitor center and a park employee or volunteer would assist staffing the interagency information center. The arrangement would encourage stronger relations between the park and the local community and encourage locals to better know "their" park and identify it as a commercial asset for the community and county.

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Site: ARCH

RECREATION

☒ Expand partnerships with schools and boys and girls associations to show how national park experiences can improve children's lives.

☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

With annual visitation over 800,000, Arches National Park offers spectacular hiking opportunities. From short, quarter-mile walks to multi-day backpack trips, hiking is one of the most popular activities in the park. This project would provide opportunities for youth groups to become involved in routine trail maintenance and trail reconstruction throughout the park. Many of the trails have been neglected for many years and this package would ensure that they were in good condition prior to the NPS Centennial. Potential Partners include: Canyon Country Conservation Corps (4Cs), Canyon Country Youth Corps Four Corners School of Outdoor Education, American Conservation Experience (ACE), American Hiking Society (National Trails Fund), American Airlines (Mile for Trails), Utah State Parks and Recreation (Utah Trails and Pathways Program), National Park Foundation.

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Site: ARCH

RECREATION

☒ Focus national, regional, and local tourism efforts to reach diverse audiences and young people and to attract visitors to lesser-known parks.

☒ Increase visitation by 25 percent at lesser-known parks through a national tourism effort aimed at helping people to discover the breadth of parks and experiences.

Establish a Grand County Day (corresponding to the park's fee-free day) offering special activities in the park emphasizing local history, park ties with local families, etc. and encourages visits from county residents and pride in "their" national park.

Proactively support Grand County's efforts to develop and direct a long-term, community driven, sustainable tourism-based economy. Promote and develop partnerships supporting this goal.

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Site: ARCH

EDUCATION

☒ Cooperate with educators to provide curriculum materials, high-quality programs, and park-based and online learning.

☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Continue to support and seek partners to support the Canyon Country Outdoor Education (CCOE) program, which is a cooperative venture between the NPS, local school districts and nonprofit organizations in southeast Utah. Field trips are conducted to Arches and Canyonlands National Parks, Hovenweep and Natural Bridges National Monuments and other areas. CCOE has published field trip plans suitable for grades one through six. The purpose of this program is:

* To support the mission of the National Park Service and the Parks as Classrooms® program, as well as park management's goals.

- To help students safely experience and understand natural and cultural resources of our national parks, surrounding areas and the earth as a whole.

- To enhance existing state approved science curricula.

- To expose students to a wide range of environmentally responsible activities in the outdoors so they can develop skills, judgment, confidence and sensitivity.

- To raise environmental awareness in the younger generation to prepare them for future roles as decision makers and voters.

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Site: ARCH

EDUCATION

☒ Introduce young people and their families to national parks by using exciting media and technology.

☒ Increase the number of web hits through the introduction of advanced, interactive features that attract young people to national parks.

Colorado Plateau Geology for park websites: Most of the Colorado Plateau parks have little more than text on the park's web sites. Since the majority of these parks have geology as a primary interpretive theme, additional screens and programs should be developed as a cohesive, coordinated effort among the parks. The Colorado Plateau origin could be shown as a region-wide event, with specific park geologic history developed for each area. This could also be developed to add to each park's Web Ranger pages, making geology relevant to students by designing games, treasure hunts and other such interactive programs. Some parks may choose to utilize these programs (adult and children) in their visitor centers, or in special programs or presentations. Potential partners include: University of Colorado IGP, U.S. Geological Survey, Geological Resources Division, NPS, Geological Society of Arizona and Utah, Colorado Geological Survey; Denver Museum of Nature and Science. Possibly also oil companies or other geological interests.

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Site: ARCH

EDUCATION

☒ Promote life-long learning to connect generations through park experiences.

☒ Enroll an additional two million children in the Junior Ranger program.

Maintain and sustain the park's Junior Ranger program so children can continue to effectively experience the park through an active program that enhances a connection to the resource, provides "take-home" ideas and activities, and promotes personal stewardship. Offer the park's Junior Ranger program on-line and expand to include a wider range of audience ages with appropriately corresponding activities. Offer other in-park interpretive activities specifically targeting children and families.

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Site: ARCH

EDUCATION

☒ Impart to every American a sense of their citizen ownership of their national parks.

☒ Increase visitors' satisfaction, understanding, and appreciation of the parks they visit.

Establish a Grand County Day (corresponding to the park's fee-free day) offering special activities in the park emphasizing local history, park ties with local families, etc. and encourages visits from county residents and pride in "their" national park.

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Site: ARCH

PROFESSIONALISM

☒ Be one of the top 10 places to work in America.

☒ Meet 100 percent of diversity recruitment goals by employing people who reflect the face of America.

Continue proactive recruitment and placement of diverse candidates for park vacancies and active participation in special diversity programs such as IMR's Maintenance Leadership Development Program.

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Site: ARCH

PROFESSIONALISM

☒ Use strategic planning to promote management excellence.

☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Complete Arches National Park Climbing Management Plan. Finalize Transportation Improvement Plan and begin implementing the actions identified.

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Site: ARCH

PROFESSIONALISM

☒ Promote a safety and health culture for all employees and visitors.

☒ Reduce the number of employee lost-time incidents and serious visitor injuries by 20 percent.

Continue to be a leader in safety awareness and protection by conducting regularly scheduled safety meetings and ensuring the entire staff at Arches performs their duties in a safe manner. Increase proactive approach to safety by assuring that all supervisors increase walk-around safety checks, and front-line staff are included in the process by conducting documented walk-arounds in their respective work area on monthly, revolving basis. Assure that at least two managers and two front-line members of the staff are trained in Root Cause Analysis. Dedicate one day every-six months to a park-wide safety stand-down and engaging safety-based activities.

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☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Accessibility planning and implementation will result in physical accessibility improvements for park employees and visitors. While buildings, restrooms, picnic sites and campsites are generally accessible, visitors with physical impairments, for example, to Arches National Park cannot access a single arch nor a single cultural resource. Several sites were identified in the past as possible projects, but no specific planning or engineering has ever been completed. Double Arch and the Wolfe Ranch National Historic District and Petroglyph panel are examples of sites which could, and should, be made accessible. Potential Partners: Telecom Pioneers, Utah State Parks Trails Program, makers of recycled lumber (e.g. Unilever; Close the Loop, Inc.)

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Site: ARCH

PROFESSIONALISM

☒ Model what it means to work in partnership.

☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Arches has a number of very active and involved partners who give to the park in many forms including volunteer time, monetary help and advocacy of park issues. These partners include the Canyonlands Natural History Association, the newly created Bates Wilson Legacy Foundation, Plateau Restorations, Grand Canyon Trust and many individuals.

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